



VISTA MATTERS

- June Edition -

...and, a Great Celebration Was Had by All!

We celebrated our success.
We remembered our founders.
We appreciated the accolades.
We enjoyed the refreshments.
We laughed about the raffle results.



April 30 was a perfect spring day for our VISTA Celebration as we came together to hear about what has made us so successful (our members!), to learn about our history (starting in founder Bill West's backyard), and to enjoy the camaraderie of what we call our VISTA family.

We celebrated our members and their families and partners who so willingly allow us time and support to be here, in what many of us call our happy place. And we



celebrated our community and friends who support us with solidarity and smiles.

We celebrated our donors, partners and grantors, who support us with cash and in-kind donations to help VISTA grow and thrive.

We celebrated our history and what it has taken to get us to today, as recounted by our founder Bill West.

We celebrated our status as Hillsborough County's first garden park, and the consistent, vast support from our favorite County Commissioner, Ken Hagan, who presented VISTA Gardens with an inspiring commendation from the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners.

We celebrated those members who are no longer with us, Daun Miller and Alicia Laddon.

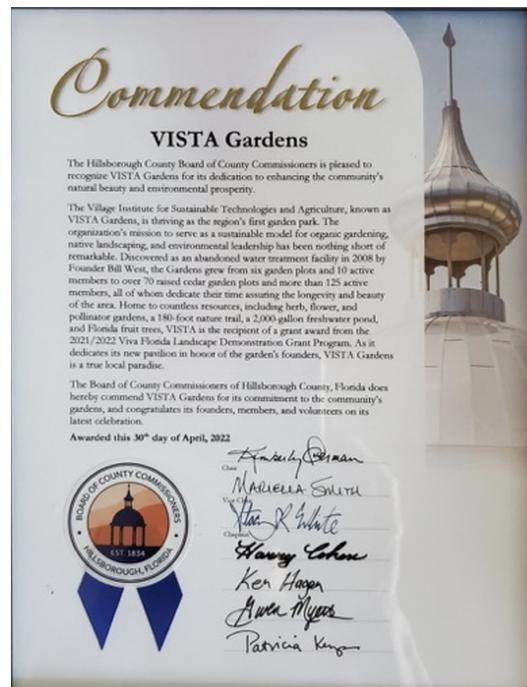


We celebrated what we are today, thanks to all the huge efforts from our members and student volunteers. And we celebrated what we know we can become, as we continue to grow and nurture not only our flowers, herbs and vegetables but also our bodies, spirits and community.



Huge appreciation goes to the members and volunteers who dedicated time, energy and effort to make this event such a success. Special thanks to **Ann Wallace** for her unique and beautiful garden and table decorations, **Laurie Kleiner** for the delicious refreshments (and Greenacre Properties for underwriting the food costs),

Steve Taylor for the highly successful fun raffle and silent auction, **Evans Bostick** and **Marty Kleiner** for making the entire garden look even better and more beautiful, **Terrisa and Dan Bernard** for their creation and installation of the beautiful Remembrance and Founders plaques, **Rolfe Evenson** for his smooth handling of our guests' parking needs, **Vivian and Kaydence Rao** for their gorgeous flower bouquets,



Lori Vella for the celebratory bubbles, **Keshia Arlinghaus** for her helpful membership table, **Roberta Owens** for her always excellent insights and suggestions during the entire planning process, **Mary Ellen Dallman** for ensuring that the rain held off after our event, and all the **Sickles High School National Honor Society student volunteers** for their helping hands and big smiles.

Events

Group Bike Ride for Pedal to Empower.

Sunday, June 5, 9:00 a.m. Phillipe Park, Safety Harbor

Optional donations benefit women and girls worldwide

Nozzle News

More and more often, water station valves are left open and water pours out at the end of the hose. When this happens, the water pump battery loses power and cannot provide water when others need it. To prevent this, the Board decided to remove all nozzles that have flow control. The flow control nozzles are in a bucket near the shed, so you can retrieve yours to take home.



New Nozzle

The new garden nozzles require the user to turn the valve off in order to turn the water off, and the water flow rate can be adjusted at the valve by turning the handle part way. To water just the ground and not the plants themselves, simply remove the nozzle and use the hose.

If you have a favorite water nozzle, feel free to bring it with you and then take it home the same day. Thank you for working with us to save water and our pump battery.

Reminder to VISTA Gardeners

Several members mentioned that they noticed their flowers and veggies disappearing. This does not appear to be the work of our local critters. Please remember that each plot is rented for the private use of our seasonal gardeners. If you are interested in tasting what other gardeners have grown, please ask them first.

Community Beds

There are areas of the garden that are open for harvest from everyone. Herbs from the raised herb beds and pots along the roadway, flowers from the six flower garden beds behind The House of the Rising Seeds, and vegetables left on the picnic table next to the shed are all for sharing. In this spirit, please take only what you need so there will be

plenty for everyone.

Deb Ramos is the New Chair of The House of the Rising Seeds!

The Board is delighted that **Deb Ramos** has accepted the role of Chair of The House of the Rising Seeds. You've probably seen Deb taking care of wildflowers on the berm, caring for seedlings in the seed house and caring for her own veggies in bed CW6.

As Deb says, her strong suit is operations, which is exactly what this committee does in our little greenhouse; they find and grow the best seedlings for us, so we have access to the most successful plantings for our garden beds.



If you've worked alongside Deb, you know she is high-energy. Committed to sustainability, she supports composting, waste reduction and a Styrofoam-free environment.

Like most of us, Deb hates weeding, but she hates weeds even more, so you'll see her at VISTA tackling that pesky torpedo grass.

Deb is already busy in The House of the Rising Seeds

With Deb's professional background as an IT project manager in Massachusetts, she'll lead her committee members to make data-driven decisions about what and when to plant in the greenhouse. Deb's approach is to "build a strong and diverse team where we collaborate and value each other's opinions."

Thank you, Deb, for taking the lead on this important function at VISTA Gardens.

If you can help the HRS Committee seed and take care of seedlings, please contact [Deb Ramos](#).

Interested in Volunteering as a Committee Chair?

We have two other committees that could use your leadership expertise and skill.

Contact [Jennifer Grebenschikoff](#) to learn how to help guide VISTA's continued success and growth.

Start Your Garden Plan for Fall!

For the Fall 2022 season, the HRS team will offer seedling varieties that are successful in **Growing Zone 9b**. Watch for ordering details in the July newsletter.

Upcoming dues

VISTA Annual Membership Renewal notices will be sent out on July 1, 2022, for the 2022-2023 gardening season.

VISTA Infrastructure Committee

Our **infrastructure committee** performs four primary roles at VISTA:

- Keeps the equipment, irrigation system, shed, pavilion, pergolas, ladders, tools, etc. in working order.
- Designs and constructs new projects to support the other committees and enhance the garden appearance; approves structures completed by other members.
- Keeps weeds from intruding into the perimeter of the garden bed areas and ponds.
- Teaches and works with members and volunteers interested in various electrical and mechanical activities at the garden.

Tasks can be as simple as using a bicycle pump to refill the wheelbarrow tires or as complex as troubleshooting the solar-powered irrigation system. Typical tasks include replacing rotten wood and faulty valves, regluing PVC pipes, maintaining small engines, pressure washing, erecting signs, installing rain runoff



Marty's Quintessential Smile and Wheelbarrow

pipes and painting.

Most work is performed by volunteer members. However, occasionally the task is beyond the ability of any member.

For instance, when the well pump broke, the Infrastructure Committee selected a professional well pump company and ensured the work was performed properly.

The Infrastructure Committee includes Marty Kleiner (Chair), Abdul Azeez, Jason Henning, Doug Kostelnik, Ralph Romero, Miriam Steinberg and Saif Syed. If you have any interest or handyman experience, our committee could use you. Please contact [Marty Kleiner](#).

Exciting New Infrastructure Projects

While most of our garden beds are slowing down, the infrastructure committee is in high gear to complete projects before the fall growing season begins.

Following is a list of projects that will be finished by the end of summer:

- Upgrade the solar-powered irrigation system with a new controller and two more solar panels; replace the eight lead-acid batteries with one lithium-iron-phosphate battery, which will almost double the existing capacity. (grant money awarded)
- Install solar-powered automated gate to enter the property. (grant money awarded)
- Construct a low wooden walkway/bridge near the retention pond.

Summer Maintenance Projects:

- Empty the four 275-gallon water storage tanks and pressure wash the inside.
- Repair rotted wood on the garden beds.

New Members



Brita Lincoln

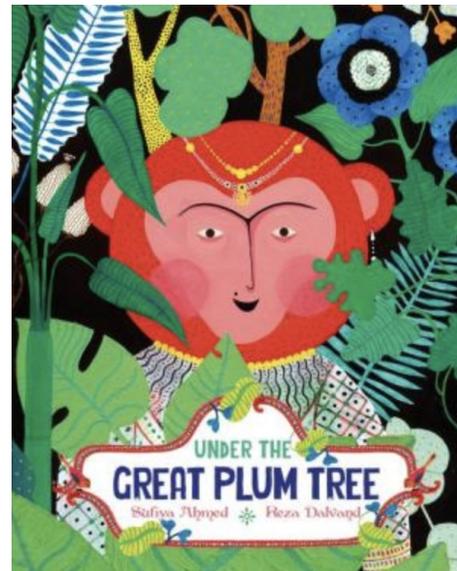
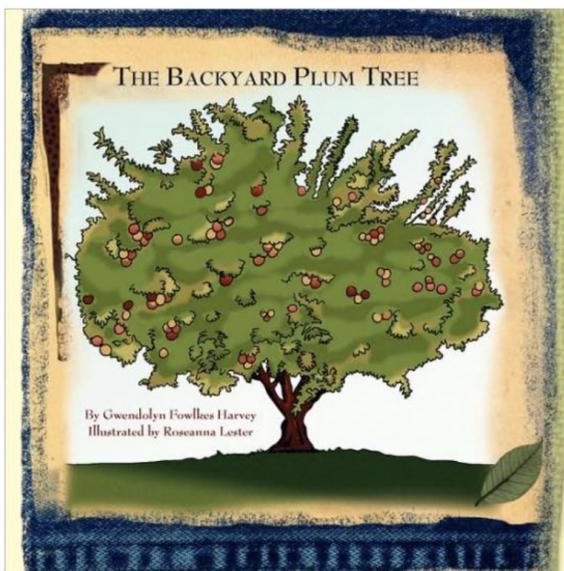


**Erik (left) and Emeli Spicer (middle)
Lakshman Kolluru (right)**



**Christina Frankson (left)
Martha Guzman (second right) and family
Karin Finch (right)**

Plum Crazy in the Little Free Library



Read more about these books by clicking on the book image.

Both VISTA and our community appreciate [Forever Friends](#) for the grant to purchase books for the Little Free Library.

Florida Native Plant of the Month

VISTA's Wildflower Garden is a Florida Landscape Demonstration Garden, funded by a Viva Florida grant from the Florida Wildflower Foundation.

Standing tall among the wildflowers are three fledgling [Flatwoods plum trees](#).



Flatwoods plum tree in bloom, co-starring with Sweet Everlasting and Coreopsis wildflowers

Click here to submit your photos and stories for future editions of VISTA Matters.

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Connect with us

